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## LEO XIII. AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION.

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ONE of the greatest questions of the day, it is admitted by all, is the social question, and its most illustrious exponent is, without doubt, the august Pontiff of the Vatican. Ever since his assumption of the tiara Leo XIII. has manifested a special interest in all problems relating to the welfare of society. This is abundantly evinced by his noble encyclicals on these topics, and by his numberless letters to eminent representatives of church and state.

In a private audience, with which I was favored not long since, the social question was introduced and discussed at some length. I ventured to tell his Holiness that the editor of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW had requested me to write an article on this subject, and that the people of America, non-Catholics as well as Catholics, were always pleased to give respectful and reverent attention to his utterances, and especially to all those in any wise bearing on the condition of the laboring classes.

“Ah, yes,” he said, “the Americans are a noble people. I love them greatly. I am aware of the deep interest they take in social problems and was gratified to learn that they received so kindly my encyclical on the condition of labor. You may tell the people of the United States, through the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, that I shall always be ready to contribute to the fullest extent of my power towards their well-being and happiness, and especially towards the well-being and happiness of the wage-earners of their great republic.

“The social question,” continued the venerable Pontiff, his eyes beaming with light and intelligence as he discoursed on the subject to which he attaches so much importance—“the social question is the great question of the future. *La question sociale, c'est la question de l'avenir.* It is a question in which all should

be interested, and each one should contribute his quota towards lessening and removing the difficulties with which it is at present beset. It is particularly desirable that ecclesiastics should be thoroughly conversant with the subject, and that they should take an active part in every discussion and in every movement that looks toward the betterment of the social condition of humanity, and especially the social condition of that major portion which must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow."

This is but a brief synopsis of what the Holy Father actually said, and conveys no idea whatever of the earnestness and impressiveness which characterized the spoken words of the large-hearted and noble-minded occupant of the chair of Peter. He dwelt particularly on his encyclicals *Immortale Dei* and *Rerum Novarum*, and referred incidentally to other documents, bearing on the same subjects, of which he is the author.

The encyclical *Longinqua Oceani Spatia*, recently issued, is, in a measure, but a supplement of the *Rerum Novarum*. I shall consider the two documents, therefore, in so far as they both deal with the social problem, as virtually one and the same.

So much by way of preamble. The following pages are designed to give a brief exposition of the origin, character and history of the social question from the Roman Catholic point of view, and to exhibit the gist of the Pope's teaching, as gathered from his letters and encyclicals on this all-important subject.

## I.

A LITTLE more than a century ago, in 1791, the French Revolution abolished by a third and definitive decree the corporations which formed the basis of the old social order. In 1891, Leo XIII. promulgated a new economic charter, at the very moment when the industrial association, which was the outgrowth of the Manchester School, was approaching dissolution.

In lieu of the old organic *régime* the French Revolution substituted the reign of individualism. Unlimited competition, freedom of labor, the preponderance of capital and the general introduction of machinery ushered into existence the fourth estate proletarians, or wage-earners—and with it the social question. The organism became a mechanism, and from its excesses proceeded the evils from which we now suffer. As matters at present stand, we have two inimical forces, standing face to face ;

on one side, the modern state with its army and its police ; on the other, socialism and organized labor with its battalions and its long pent-up grievances.

Never before was humanity confronted with such a danger. It is related that when Antioch was taken by the Persians, A. D. 266, the entire population of the city was assembled in the theatre. The seats of this theatre were cut in the foot of the escarped mountain which crowned the ramparts. The eyes of all present were fixed on the chief actor ; every ear was strained to catch his words, when suddenly his hands began to contract, his arms became paralyzed, and his eyes assumed a startling stare. From the stage on which he stood he beheld the Persians, already masters of the defences of the ill-fated city, rushing down the mountain with resistless impetuosity. At the same moment the enemy's arrows began to shower down within the precincts of the theatre, and to awaken its inmates to a realization of their perilous situation.

Is not our situation analagous ? Have we not felt the earth tremble under our feet, and heard the social revolution, as Lassalle predicted it would, knock at our doors ? And what augments the danger, is that the International seems decided on the policy of delay, until the natural pressure of our social condition shall place the reins of power in the hands of the "new masters." 1848 and 1870 appear to have been the last attempts of the Fourth Estate to achieve victory by force of arms. Its leaders are unwilling to commit new blunders, and are persuaded that the day will come when socialism will be triumphant.

Leo XIII. chose this prophetic hour to make known the social evangel to the combatants on both sides. Among the wrecks of human institutions, the Papacy remains the sole international power, sufficiently equipped, sufficiently sure of its own resources, sufficiently endowed with light and energy, to attempt the supreme work. It, alone, has imperturbable faith in the future of humanity. It is idealist, in spite of all deceptions ; optimist, notwithstanding all the spasmodic weaknesses of the body politic. As in the politico-religious order, Leo XIII. has, through his encyclical, *Immortale Dei*, preached the code of reconciliation, so has he, in the economic order, promulgated the charter of social harmony. We recognize in the earnest, but tender words of the Pontiff, the divine perfume of the Master, the precise lessons of

the Fathers of the Church, and the carefully pondered and the soundly democratic teachings of the Doctors of the Middle Ages. For the first time, economic science has pity on the wage-earner, and discusses the new issues raised without rancor or recrimination. At the same time it exhibits a respect for the rights of all while insisting on the duties of all, which will forever render the encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, not only the most glorious monument of the present pontificate, but also the most beneficent contribution yet made to the new order of things. In the Church alone is there a condition of stable equilibrium, which always remains unaffected. The personal character of the encyclical resides, not so much in the lessons of justice and charity as in the perfect adaptation of revealed truth to our present condition, and in the beautiful and fruitful manner in which the facts of history are harmonized with eternal principles.

Leo XIII. is at the same time as compassionate as a mother and as impassible as an anatomist; as just as a judge and as tender as an infant. He loves ardently that poor humanity which is so often blind to its best interests, but which is more frequently betrayed by its own leaders. In him the Papacy appears, even to-day, as the empyrean in which all hatreds and struggles are buried and in which all great reconciliations are effected. Indeed the most distinguishing characteristic of the encyclical is that it seeks to harmonize capital and labor, to reconcile employer with employee, to unite justice and charity.

The first part of the encyclical shows that the accord between labor and capital is one of the most beautiful and most consoling laws of political economy. As God, in the book of Job, "makes peace in the high places," so does Leo XIII., from the lofty eminence which he occupies, bring to men the peace-giving breath of the Infinite.

This equilibrium has its origin in the Pope's comprehensive genius. Leo XIII. knows not that exclusivism which divides the social order into separate compartments. His breadth of view and love of humanity preclude this. His keen intellect has grappled firmly with all the difficulties of the situation. Economists too often separate what should ever be united. One expects everything from the state, another looks for a cure only from above, while others still appeal for a solution of the problem to special associations or to private initiative. But Leo XIII.

embraces all these factors, and causes every one of them to make for the common weal. The Church, the State, individual activities, society as a whole, should not they be prodigal of their best efforts in helping forward the work of reconciliation ?

It is this harmony and breadth of view which give to the encyclical the character of arbitrament which it possesses, and make it, as it were, a kind of truce of God. Hence spring the facility with which the Pontiff steers clear of the quicksands of this vast world. And with what dangers is he not beset ? Intrinsic difficulties, technical difficulties, complexity of subject, a continual transformation of political economy, which scarcely permits one to promulgate doctrines and principles, antagonistic passions and rivalries—Leo XIII. has met all these obstacles.

Thanks to his marvellous competence and his profound knowledge of the subject-matter of debate ; his consummate art in separating theories from facts, and principles from remedies, Leo XIII. has avoided these reefs. He is at the same time a doctor and a practical man of affairs ; an illuminator and a conciliator ; resting here on the Gospel and St. Thomas Aquinas, and there seeking aid in the immense modern laboratory, where are found both men and hypotheses.

Such are the distinguishing notes of the encyclical ; its opportuneness, its evangelical character, its irenic harmony, its perfect comprehensiveness. These are combined with scientific precision and an incomparable simplicity of art, in which supreme elegance and exact science unite in sweetest symphony.

## II.

WHAT, it may be asked, has occurred in society, that special exertion is now required to keep in motion a machine which formerly moved of itself without noise and without effort ? In what does this much-talked-of social question consist ? All are making the same inquiry, but the responses given are as diverse as the prescriptions of physicians. More than ever before the world is brought to face seriously the social question. Formerly certain minor social questions perturbed humanity, but the crisis which now confronts us is peculiar to our own epoch.

It is only the foolish hope of interested optimists which will lead men to believe that they are sheltered from the impending catastrophe, because, forsooth, the same endemic malady has be-

fore raged in all countries and at all times. It is, indeed, true that social antagonism is not something new or something peculiar to our century. But there is between the past and the present this essential difference. Formerly, after the struggle between employer and employee was over, rest and peace were to be found in the workshop or in the home, whereas to-day the struggle has reached our very hearthstones. It persists in a dull and sullen manner, when it does not break forth openly, and it is ever compassing the ruin of society because it is incessantly destroying all chance of domestic happiness. Never before, indeed, has the social question knocked in so threatening a manner at the doors of the civil order.

In the introduction to his epoch-making document, Leo XIII. directs attention to some of the evidences of the dominant evil—extreme riches, extreme misery, and the indescribable desolation which has entered the world of the proletariat in consequence of the atomization of society under the levelling reign of capital.

Gifted with a methodical mind and endowed with a rare genius for classification, the Pope limits himself to indicating the roots of the evil, without entering into details, or descending to investigations of secondary importance.

It may truly be said that the social question arises from a five-fold revolution: the revolution in machinery; the revolution in political economy; the revolution in religion; the revolution in the state, and the revolution brought about by the general movement of humanity.

Machinery, or rather the abuse of machinery, was the first to effect a transformation in the economic order. It is not without reason that Lassalle styles it "the revolution incarnate"—*Die verkörperte Revolution*. Machinery has revolutionized the mode of production, the manner of labor, and the distribution of revenue and of property. It has destroyed the workshop and introduced the factory in its stead. It has sterilized manual labor and, by its immense productivity, has internationalized prices and markets. While, on the one hand, it has created the despotism of capital, it has, on the other, called into existence the unorganized army of the proletariat. It has ground humanity into a powder, without cohesion and without unity, and has placed the world of labor at the mercy of a few soulless plutocrats. This new order of things means the reign of the few; it

implies the permanence of expropriation and the resurrection of ancient Rome, where millions of slaves were trampled under foot by an insolent oligarchy of wealth. And finally, by its fatal centralization, machinery has engendered a double International—the International of capital and the International of socialism.

Against such a condition of things there should have been erected some sort of protecting dike. But instead of creating a new order, in conformity with the changed mode of production, economic science introduced into the laws and institutions of the land those very principles which have rendered the influence of machinery sinister and destructive. Of an agency marvellously rich in its potentialities, it has made an engine of revolution. Production, production, nothing but production, such has been the ideal, the last word of the Third Estate and of economists. Adam Smith in England, J. B. Say in France, and Schulze-Delitsch in Germany, have traced out this new legislation, with a view to bringing out of machinery all its latent force, without ever thinking of the terrible confusion that was sure to ensue.

Science and politics have leagued together to render the state omnipotent. How then could socialism regard with serenity a factor of such unquestioned power ?

Absolute collectivism was born and received with acclamation in the *comitia* of the people before it was scientifically promulgated by Carl Marx. The sons of toil constitute the majority. Why are they not then the rulers ?

Riehl, before Sainte-Beuve, had drawn the portrait of the literary proletarian as the guide of the laboring proletarian. *De-classé* and a conspirator, ambitious, jealous and vindictive, he finds a use for his knowledge in giving his services to the advancement of revolutionary socialism. A German, Riehl spoke for the Germans. But have not his prognostications been everywhere verified ? You have supplied outcasts and the declassed with all modern arms—education, universal suffrage, literature. You have awakened them to a consciousness of their power. You have taught them that law is the voice of the majority, that education is the stepping-stone by which they may attain to power. You have endowed them with sovereignty. You have made them legislators and judges. Why, then, should not the masses rise up and announce to the Third Estate : We are the masters ?

Politics and their historical environment created Lassalle and



Carl Marx. Lassalle and Carl Marx created militant socialism and the International.

"Liberalism," says Averbeck, "has acted as a state would act if it should banish a part of its citizens to a solitary island and let them there begin a struggle for existence. This state gives to the exiles all the treasures of science—libraries and scientific apparatus—but it withholds from them what is necessary for subsistence. It is to be presumed that such unfortunates will burn the books in order to warm themselves and break the instruments in order to make tools that will enable them to gain the necessities of life." The same writer was likewise one of the first to signalize the perils of this political and social contrast. To day the situation seems even more grave. For, has not the International the same engines of war as the State? Has it not to hand all the appliances requisite to start a revolution? The stupefied Liberals persist in persecuting the Church, in weakening the ethical sense, and dancing on a volcano until everything shall be blown to atoms.

Do we not read the signs of the times? One would declare that everything conspires to crown the Fourth Estate. As far back as 1810 there were not wanting far-seeing synthetic minds, who foresaw that the reign of social democracy would issue in the natural and fatal termination of civilization. Philosophers and critics have expended an infinite amount of wit in their attempts to give a definition of civilization, but no two have been able to agree on the same definition. The events of our day, however, make a definition unnecessary, for we have before our very eyes the most salient facts of all history past and present. For what is the evolution of humanity but its expansion and progressive exaltation?

All the theories of philosophers and all the preachments of exploiters are of no avail. We are moving toward a triumphant democracy. Whether the transformation of the aristocratic and *bourgeois* society into a democratic society be slow or prompt, violent or peaceful, it is none the less inevitable; and more than this, none the less irrevocable, once it shall have been effected.

There are several reasons in explanation of the difficulty of a return. All men are not sensible of the exalted charm of liberty, and freedom is not an imperative need for a large number of men. But the sweetness of equality appeals strongly to

the most feeble intelligences, and men are slow to renounce this pleasure when they have once tasted it. Besides this, the laws and customs of a democratic society are in accord with certain ideas of right and justice, and they find in the conscience as well as in the passions of men a powerful support.

What intensity marks this movement! What a formidable support for the Fourth Estate! And how singular the coincidence of this general current with the present economic crisis. Sieyès wrote: "What is the Third Estate? Nothing. What ought it to be? Everything." Is it astonishing that the chiefs of the International apply these words to the Fourth Estate?

We have briefly considered the five confluents which constitute the river of the social question. Never has a more complicated situation, or one more pregnant with peril, weighed upon men. What were the invasions of the barbarians from the north of Europe, or the upheavals of the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, in comparison with the threatened explosion of this vast world already stirred to its profoundest depths and in a state of violent ebullition?

Has not the time at length come when some one should speak in the name of all and above all; when some one should take up the problem, not with the pedantry of party, nor with affected scholastic display, but with a keen and serene intellect which is competent to get at the heart of things without becoming entangled, and is capable of taking a comprehensive survey of the situation without getting confused? Is there not required one of those rare men with whom conscience in everything is a prime necessity and whose greatest pleasure and recompense lie in the laborious pursuit of good and in the absolute discharge of duty?

Such an one is Leo XIII. With that buoyant and indomitable spirit which has never known weakness, of which age has respected the integrity, Leo XIII., after having disentangled, analyzed and scrutinized all the elements of debate, has judged it necessary, not only as a man of science, but also as supreme teacher, to undertake the great work of synthesis and truth.

### III.

SINCE issuing his famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, of which Europe, poisoned by the School of Manchester and by the teachings of a materialistic philosophy, had greater need than

young and prosperous America, Leo XIII. has developed his apostolic doctrine more in detail. This is observed especially in his letters to the Count de Mun, the Bishop of Grenoble, the Bishop of Liège, the Cardinal of Mechlin, as well as in his letters to M. Decurtins, to Abbé Six, to Abbé Naudet and others. All these manifestations of the great Papal mind are bound together by the same golden thread. Go to the people to assist and emancipate them. Establish syndicates and associations for the laboring classes. Demand from the State legislation for their protection, and strive to secure the passage of a law, international in character, which shall protect at the same time both employer and employee from economic piracy. Restrict the hours of labor, and place women and children under proper protection. Give to the poor man a just remuneration for his work, and strive to make him an upright and honorable citizen. Above all, see that religion is the inspiring and directing soul of the home, for without it the work of reconstruction and regeneration is impossible.

That which, above all else, brings out in bold relief the solicitude of Leo XIII. for the laboring man is the injunction which he lays on, the mission which he commits to, the priests of the Church. He wishes them to go forth into the market-place, to visit the factories, to found societies for workingmen, to inaugurate conferences for them, and thus to direct the large democratic and social current which is the result of long ages of effort, labor and sacrifice. To Americans, with their native activity and independence, this is easy and natural. It, however, demanded evangelical courage to impose this on the Old World, where three centuries of renaissance of pagan law, and a century of *laissez-faire* and *laissez-passer* have atomized society and divided the human family into two opposing camps—on one side the tyranny of the law and of the employer; on the other, renewed servitude and virtual rebellion—everywhere hatred, lack of equilibrium, egotism and overt struggle.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Pope's teaching anent the labor problem is his return to the ideas of evangelical solidarity, to the lessons of social wisdom, and to the principles which governed the guilds of the middle ages—all of which, with singular skill, he adapts to the needs and conditions of the century just closing. Sometimes reactionaries, and even English Liberals, reproach the Pope with going too far and with favoring

methods which are regarded as revolutionary. In the eyes of such people he is a Socialist. This revolutionist, however, but relights the almost extinguished torch of Christian traditions. He is simply continuing the spirit of the early ages of the Church. "The day when there shall be placed in the chair of St. Peter," wrote de Vogué in his *Spectacles Contemporains*, "a Pope animated with the sentiments of Cardinal Gibbons and Cardinal Manning, the Church will stand forth before the world as the most formidable power it has ever known." So be it. Is not Leo XIII. such a Pontiff? Fearlessly brushing aside three centuries of cabinet diplomacy, he declares his intention of following the traditions of those illustrious pontiffs who are honored in history as social law-givers and emancipators of the people. He synthesizes admirably the Gospel, St. John Chrysostom, St. Thomas, Gregory VII., Alexander IV., Pius IV., and many others besides. "The danger is imminent," wrote Madam Adam in her *Patrie Bourgeoise*, "for Leo XIII. is preparing a crusade which a younger Pope may render triumphant. The constitution of the Church and individual devotedness, which Christianity, we must admit, is capable of exalting, in a far higher degree than the philosophy of Paul Bert, are calculated to provoke one of those grand movements of moral reform which are always based on a social movement." Madam Adam forgets that it is not a crusade, but a return to the principles of economic and organic mutuality which obtained before the Renaissance, and an adaptation of them to the age in which we live. This is what Leo XIII. told Castelar, the Spanish Republican, in so many words. "It is necessary," said he, "to bring back the Church to its original traditions." In this declaration are revealed at once the historic mind and the originality of Leo XIII. In it are disclosed his greatness and the unity and majestic co-ordination of all his acts and all his teachings.

Economically and socially, the Renaissance, the resurrection of pagan law, the cult of exaggerated individualism, the philosophy which issued in Darwinism, have again brought back and made general both the pride and the slavery of ancient Rome. Absolute and pagan theories regarding property, exaltation of liberty, which, while it is the honor of the human mind in the domain of politics, is folly in the domain of economic science, substitution of an artificial mechanism for the normal organism,

rupture with industrial organizations and the atomization of society—in a word, all the miseries of our modern world have proceeded from these sources. Our age is, indeed, but a walled-in field of battle, in which egotism, individual interests and passions are engaged in homicidal combat. Formerly society was an edifice, in which each social floor had its protection, its right, its security, its well-being. It was, to employ another figure, a vast organism, in which each member, while it was subject to the law governing the whole, had its proper function and its full life.

It is this thought, eminently Christian and eminently evangelical—a thought reposing on justice and love—which is the main-spring of the social action of the Holy Father. Here, as elsewhere, Leo XIII., while always having a regard for the times in which we live, supplies us with the traditional means of subsistence and defence. A man of the past and of the future, continuing in his own beneficent way the policy of his illustrious predecessors, while at the same time paving the way for a better to-morrow—without change of principles, but by the application of new methods—the present Pontiff stands conspicuous in history as an innovator, while he is all the while but a priest of the antique ideal, but an ideal appropriated for our own time.

Besides the teachings of antiquity there are other guides nearer to us for pontifical initiative. A conservative power, the Papacy scarcely ever moves in advance of the political and social exigencies of an epoch. It does not create, it codifies.

The Fathers have determined with precision this law of organic growth. Origen, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and, above all, St. Vincent of Lerins, have developed the philosophy of this phenomenon. It is thus that they speak of a *sensus theologicus*, of an *intelligentia ecclesiastica*, of a *sensus Catholicus*, which are affirmed, expanded and translated in a body of doctrines, in *eodem sensu et in eodem dogmate*.

In a lower degree, the Papacy appropriates and condenses the human teachings of each epoch in so far as they bear on the immutable principles of the evangelical and traditional deposit. In every direction in which the energies of the Church are employed, we remark a formal evolution of this institution which is in relation to the evolution of the ideas and the facts of the contemporary world. With the plastic power, which is *par excellence* the sign of her vitality, the Church adapts herself in our days to

the service of societies formed outside of herself, and often opposed to her, as she adapted herself to the feudal system, to the Renaissance, and to all the metamorphoses of its flock. Her work, sometimes, illudes the careless observer, because it goes on by processes which resemble the mysterious processes of growth and development in the higher organisms. Under the action of vital force all the atoms of our body are continually being changed and renewed, but our form and personality are in nowise modified thereby. It is in this sense that we must understand the renovation of the Church and the Papacy.

The Church and the Papacy are never in a hurry. In everything which does not concern eternity, in the domain of the contingent and the relative, her rôle is not to anticipate, but to regulate and to consecrate all the progress definitively made. Some thinkers urge, as an objection and as examples of unexplainable variation, the misfortunes of certain bold spirits, who, in the past, were blamed for having maintained political and social doctrines which were subsequently cordially received by the Vatican. These innovators had started too soon. Political truths, essentially relative, do not become complete verities and acceptable to Rome save at the moment when they appear practical, or when the circumstances of time and place clearly evince that the fruit is ripe and may be gathered. In all that concerns herself, the Church is the sole judge of this moment.

The encyclical on the condition of labor and other similar acts of Pope Leo XIII. are the official and permanent consecration of the labors and the teachings of the most devoted Catholics of this century in respect of the social question.

The first one after Ozanam, or the Viscount de Melun, to make a deep impression on Rome in this matter, was Bishop Ketteler, of Mayence. It was in 1848, when socialism appropriated all the new economic currents, that he promulgated his social evangel. His sermons, preached in the Church of St. Paul, at Frankfort, at the time of the celebrated diet; his conferences with workingmen; his book on "Christianity and Labor"; his discourses at Mayence; all his acts as bishop and statesman had this ideal: Save, emancipate the Fourth Estate by the application of the Gospel and the doctrines of St. Thomas to the economic conditions of the day.

A man of dauntless courage, comprehensive mind and noble

heart, he was at the same time a Catholic Lassalle. At one time, even, Bismarck seriously thought of making him Archbishop of Cologne, and of undertaking with him the great work of social reconstruction. The *Kulturkampf*, which the Iron Chancellor inaugurated in order to placate the national liberals, to break the power of Rome and to divide France, rendered this grandiose project illusory. Ketteler, however, did not abandon his plans. While the storms raged above the German forests he gathered about him those gallant heroes: Vogelsang, Kuefstein, Scheicher, Hitze, Joerge, Monfang, Schorlemer, Brandts, Bachem, and all that chosen band, who, even in our own day, with less *élan* and more timidity, it is true, continue to develop his ideas. At the Council of the Vatican, before the cannon of Sedan had startled Europe, the Bishop of Mayence hoped to secure official recognition of his programme, and thus bring the laboring world within the orbit of the Church. But this fondly cherished hope was not realized. "And to think"—he complained to the Archbishop of Rouen—"to think that we have not been able to utter that cry of love and sympathy to the outcasts of the century!"

But the seed which he sowed germinated. On the morrow of this same war, a representative of France took up the idea which had its birth beyond the Rhine. Supported by the teachings of Leplay and Perin, the Count de Mun, with the volcanic fire of his eloquence, continued the social crusade. He soon succeeded in rallying around himself such soldiers as La Tour du Pin, P. Pascal, M. Lorin, Abbé Noudet, Abbé Bataille, Abbé Six, M. Sabatier, and, above all, Cardinal Langénieux and M. Leon Harmel, who led to the Pope the first workingmen's pilgrimage.

At this same epoch, the Abbé Pottier, professor at Liège, in Belgium, discovered his vocation for social work. A priest and a theologian, he had a singular love for the poor, and was possessed of a judgment that was almost infallible. From the Gospel he drew forth a whole body of social doctrine, and found a sanction for his apostolate in the highest founts of Christianity. His programme is an irrefutable, economic codification of the doctrines of the Holy Fathers and of the Doctors of the Middle Ages. In spite of all the attacks which have been directed against it, it remains impregnable. Around him also have gathered a zealous body of co-workers like the Kurths, the Levies, the de Harles, the Vetragens, and hosts of others.

Then, again, there is M. Decurtens, a layman. A born democrat, and a counsellor of the nation, he is as ardent an ultramontane as he is an imperturbable socialist. A leader of the laboring classes and a man of broad culture, erudite, eloquent, and energetic, he is endowed with not only an incomparable capacity for work, but also with an incomparable power of will.

He it was who effected in Switzerland the fusion of the labor organizations, Catholic and Protestant. He it was who induced his government to convoke an assembly of all the Estates in order to consider universal, social legislation—a project which was frustrated by William II. It is he, too, who makes periodical pilgrimages to the Vatican to engage the Holy Father to direct the social movement of our time. He has many rivals and imitators, but the noblest spirits of Helvetia are with him.

Such, in brief, is the Latino-Germanic genesis, if I may so express myself, of the encyclical.

The Anglo-Saxon race furnished the Pope with reason for action. Here appear Manning, Gibbons, Ireland and Keane, the last three of whom are better known, and more highly appreciated, in Europe than in their own country. They are men of ardor and action, always optimists, ever alert and never discouraged. Both by vocation and by environment they are leaders. Disentangled from the conventionalities of the Old World, they are more free than their European *confrères*; their faith is more pronounced and their word has the true ring of the Gospel of Christ.

As an American, I am proud that the sacred spark which set Europe and the Vatican aflame was supplied by our own favored land. In 1887, when the memorial concerning the Knights of Labor was forwarded to Rome, the Christian world still hesitated. But this document was the trumpet note which settled the issue. Rome spoke, the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was promulgated, and timid, Catholic Europe breathed a sigh of relief.

Such, then, are the origin, the character and the history of the social idea of Rome. Leo XIII. has been the grand resultant of a historical movement. It is because he was obedient to the laws of history, and because he understood the social needs of his time, that he deserves to be known forever as the Pope of the workingmen and the great high-priest of our century.